

EVOLUTION F GUM LOG

Has Changed from Nuliance
to Thing of Value.

FRUIT AND TRUCK CRATES

These, Which Were Formerly Imported
from the North, Are Now Made
from the Despised Gum Logs.
Women Make the Baskets.

(Special From Staff Correspondent.)

NORFOLK, Va., May 21.—A few years ago about the most worthless thing which could be conceived of was a gum log, such as could be found in great numbers in this section and in many parts of the Carolinas. The only thing fully equaling it in worthlessness was a gum tree growing in the forest. To-day, it is an acknowledged fact, that the gum tree has added enormously, directly and indirectly to the profit of truck raising in this section. The tree, which grows in the Carolinas, and incidentally, it is responsible for an industry which gives ample payment to thousands of men and women in the community.

Not many years ago, practically all the boxes, crates, barrels and other things in the shipment of truck, came from the North. They were manufactured chiefly in the State of New York, and every year the trucker had to send away a large share of his last year's profits to pay for receptacles in which to ship his produce of the year's crop. The barrels and boxes came to Norfolk empty and were sent back filled, but the money they cost never came back.

WAS A HAPPY CONCEPTION.
One red letter day a man conceived the idea that the gum tree, which grows in profusion in the forests and swamps, would make staves and boards for truck barrels and crates. If means could be found for splitting it, he felt it known that it is as hard to split a gum log as it is to split a piece of iron. The man, however, was not deterred by this. He set about the devising of machinery with which the logs could be worked up. Other men became interested, and the result of their united labors is seen in the ponderous machinery in the barrel factories in and near this city to-day.

The factory of the Farmers' Manufacturing Company in this city, which may be taken as an average, used about 40,000 feet of gum logs every day for ten years ago. The logs are cut into staves, boxes, barrels and crates. The company turns out and sells right at the factory door every year \$300,000 truck barrels. Nobody knows how many berry baskets, holding a quart each, are made at the factory. I was told that the number of figures were certainly not under eight million; that they might reach ten million.

The company manufactures from the raw material all these barrels and boxes, and sells them to the trucker who reside almost in sight of the factory.

ARE SOLD VERY CHEAP.
A gentleman who has studied the subject closely told me to-day that the cost to the farmers of the barrels and boxes made here was only about one-fifth of that of those made from more expensive wood in the North and transported hither. Where the trucker spent ten dollars for a barrel, he now pays only two dollars, and sends as much truck to market at about as good prices.

And the owner of the gum swamp, who formerly thought the more of it he had the better, now finds it a source of growing rich off of the once despised sweet gum.

The factory alluded to above begins work with the log, as it is, it begins at the swamp, for the company owns many acres of gum timber, chiefly located in North Carolina. The logs are delivered by the railway company at the yard, and they are then piled up in the factory, where they are kept until the "drag saw" at the end of the immense building, where they are cut into four-foot lengths.

HOW BARRELS ARE MADE.
But the red letter day has not yet ready to take kindly to being worked. It first has to undergo torture in the "sawtooth." In the yard, near to the drug store, immense wooden boxes, capable of holding many thousands of logs, are being practically airtight. A box is filled with several hundred logs and closed, after which steam, conducted from two immense pipes in the factory, is turned in. The pressure of the steam is approaching these boxes for the first time is that charcoal is being manufactured by means of pit burning in a manner similar to that of the factories of the Times-Dispatch who are native to the mountainous section of Virginia. The effect of smoke is produced by clouds of steam, escaping from crevices between the boards which form the boxes.

It requires from twenty-four to forty-eight hours to reduce the gum to sublimation and put it into a mold waiting to be carried by the trucks to the waiting for it inside the factory's few yards away. When the timber has been sufficiently steamed the doors of the box are opened and the logs are drawn forth by means of grating hooks, for they are as hot as boiling water. The logs are then rolled up inside the building and to the knife—a ponderous machine, whose chief feature is a ponderous cylinder, resembling of steel, about a foot long, and a half inch in diameter. The log is firmly locked in a machine somewhat resembling a turner's lathe, and is set to cut a board of the required thickness.

The machinery is started, the log revolves rapidly against the sharp, rigid knife, and shavings 4 feet wide begin to run out along the platform behind. It takes two men, but they do not take shavings to one side, where they are taken by others and borne to another machine, to be cut into staves the desired width. The log is shaved down until there is left only a core of perhaps a foot in diameter. This is saved, and is used in thickness of less than an inch, and the pieces are used as heads for the barrels. The bark is the only portion of the log put to use in the manufacture of barrel.

The barrel is set up on a revolving machine, which the cooper works with his foot. It requires but a few minutes to turn out a first-class barrel, as good as the best ever made, and as good as the most careful trucker desires for his cabbage.

WOMEN MAKE THE BASKETS.
The berry baskets are made by machinery on the second floor. The operators are women. They work at a long table, each at a machine, the feature of which is a metal cube which just fits a quart berry basket. The thin strips from which the baskets are made, cut to exactly the proper width and length, are glued on the table at the operator's hand, arranged in pairs laid together, so as to form a malted cross. She lays the cross on the cube, presses down two ends of the four arms of the cross the cube turns half round, the other two ends are pressed down, a hoop is slipped down over the embryo box, and tacked to it. There's the box of course. I have not seen the operation of this machine, nor of the other machinery. I am supposed to explain it in the manner of those who operate them, but simply to describe them, as they impressed an onlooker.

NEGRO GIRLS MAKE ALL THE BASKETS. A white woman is employed as inspector. Boxes not up to the standard are thrown out. I was told that many of the women make over a \$1 a day. Nearly all of them have other women or children busy all the time, and the boxes are ready for instant use, and forming the crosses which are to form the sides of the baskets, and this way the number made in a day is largely increased.

The gum logs furnished material for the entire annual output of the factory, save the slender pieces of scantling to which are nailed the strips used in making the sixty-quart berry crates, which are of pine.

This is the story of the lowly and despised gum. It has made millions for the truckers, or will make it by saving it for them.

But the day will come when a gum will be as hard to find as a walnut. And the farmer will still be raising truck. What then?

W. B. H.

SLUMP IN BIG DEALS

Rapid Development on the Virginia-Kentucky Border.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

CRAB ORCHARD, VA., May 21.—Congressman C. Stump passed through here in company with several eastern capitalists on their way to Clover Fork, in Harlan county, Ky., and Lower Crab Orchard, in Lee county, Va., to finish up and pay for a large boundary of coal and timber lands recently purchased by them.

It is anticipated that a speedy development will follow this deal. Good many coal openings have been made around here in the last few days.

The Imboden Coke Company near Appalachia, is pushing their work rapidly now on their railroad lines and coke oven plant.

The railroad company is laying their rails as fast as they can get the grading done, the branch railroad to the north.

Farmers of this section are grumbling about dry weather.

BACK OF OLD VIRGINIA

William Hiler Jones Returns to His Native Soil After Half Century.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

FORK UNION, VA., May 21.—By the last train the venerable William Hiler Jones, 85 years of age, returned from Fort Wayne, Ind., where he had lived for fifty years, and will spend the evening of an eventful life with his nephew here near this, his native place.

The burden of eighty-four years does not rest lightly upon him, and he is to say that he finds his native State "elgiving too tenaciously to the memories of former past," to the exclusion of the many practical questions imposed by new conditions and altered circumstances.

Mr. Jones is the author of several volumes on political economic questions, one of which is entitled "Federal Taxes and State Expenses."

REV. PLUMMER JONES PASTOR

Appointed in Charge of Three Presbyterian Churches.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

ARVONIA, VA., May 21.—Mr. Plummer Jones, a student of Union Theological Seminary, has been appointed by the Synod as pastor of Arvon, New Canton and Scotland Presbyterian Churches. He arrived in Arvon Wednesday.

The petition of Mr. A. L. Pitts, begging for local option and receiving one of the signatures has been granted in favor of Judge Moss. Marshall District will have the opportunity to decide for himself this all-absorbing question on July 11th.

The issue will be watched with great interest.

Struck it Rich

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA., May 21.—Mr. J. T. A. Barksdale is now developing his mine at Gilbert's Station for coal. It is understood that the vein struck is very rich and promising.

THE MAGISTRATE REVERSES JUDGE

Warm Fight Over Liquor License in Stafford County.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

FREDERICKSBURG, VA., May 21.—Messrs. J. P. Jones, R. S. Payne and C. H. Kennedy, who were each granted license to sell liquor in Stafford on April 15th, one day before the Mann bill became a law, have had considerable trouble continuing business. The temperance people have been fighting them ever since and are still keeping up the war. They contend that these dealers are transacting business illegally by not conforming to the conditions of the Mann bill, notwithstanding the fact that the licenses were approved one day before the bill became a law.

Yesterday the liquor dealers applied to Judge Chichester to correct the amount of license by allowing them to pay the additional \$5 for each license required by the Mann bill. The judge did, and the licenses were again confirmed and approved. At the instance of the liquor people warrants were sworn out against the liquor dealers and they were tried yesterday afternoon in the Magistrate's court.

There was a legal battle, both sides having an array of counsel. Justice Bryan decided that Judge Chichester's ruling was void and required each of the liquor dealers to give bond of \$100 to keep the peace and not sell liquor illegally. From this judgment the liquor men appealed to the County Court and gave bond. The case will be heard at the next term.

This is said to be the only instance on record in which a ruling of a County Court has been set aside by a Magistrate's Court. Future developments will be watched with interest.

Report on Plant Fossils.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA., May 21.—Prof. Wm. M. Fontaine, of the University of Virginia, has just completed a report on the plant fossils of the Mesozoic period, collected by the Maryland

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Chamber of Commerce Selects Capt. N. T. Patterson.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

PETERSBURG, VA., May 21.—The Emporia Land and Investment Company, which has just increased its capital stock from \$5,000 to \$100,000 and established its principal office in Petersburg, has taken over the Eittrick mill property in this city. Just what the company's purposes is to do with this property is not at this time known. There will be further developments in the next few days.

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